



NEWS RELEASE



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Occupational Employment and Wages in Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, May 2013

Workers in the Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$17.63 in May 2013, 21 percent below the nationwide average of \$22.33, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 21 of the 22 major occupational groups, including education, training, and library; construction and extraction; and sales and related.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 5 of the 22 occupational groups, including production, transportation and material moving, and healthcare practitioners and technical. Conversely, 15 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including office and administrative support, business and financial operations, and management. (See [table A](#) and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton had 29,630 jobs in production, accounting for 20.6 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.6-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$14.85, measurably below the national wage of \$16.79.

With employment of 4,180, team assemblers was the largest occupation within the production group, followed by upholsterers (2,590) and sewing machine operators (1,900). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of production and operating workers, and upholsterers, with mean hourly wages of \$23.93 and \$18.34, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were team assemblers (\$12.51) and production workers helpers (\$12.78). (Detailed occupational data for production are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_25860.htm.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2013

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Hickory	United States	Hickory	Percent difference ¹
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$22.33	\$17.63*	-21
Management	4.9	3.4*	53.15	50.44*	-5
Business and financial operations.....	5.0	2.3*	34.14	28.68*	-16
Computer and mathematical	2.8	0.8*	39.43	31.09*	-21
Architecture and engineering	1.8	0.9*	38.51	30.21*	-22
Life, physical, and social science	0.9	0.4*	33.37	27.59*	-17
Community and social services.....	1.4	1.4	21.50	18.26*	-15
Legal	0.8	0.3*	47.89	36.65*	-23
Education, training, and library.....	6.3	5.7*	24.76	19.05*	-23
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.....	1.3	0.5*	26.72	18.00*	-33
Healthcare practitioner and technical.....	5.8	7.0*	35.93	30.91*	-14
Healthcare support.....	3.0	4.0*	13.61	12.07*	-11
Protective service.....	2.5	2.7*	20.92	14.84*	-29
Food preparation and serving related	9.0	8.3*	10.38	9.27*	-11
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	2.3*	12.51	11.08*	-11
Personal care and service.....	3.0	1.9*	11.88	10.47*	-12
Sales and related	10.6	9.3*	18.37	15.24*	-17
Office and administrative support.....	16.2	12.8*	16.78	14.98*	-11
Farming, fishing, and forestry.....	0.3	0.1*	11.70	12.32	5
Construction and extraction	3.8	2.0*	21.94	16.93*	-23
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.1	21.35	18.19*	-15
Production	6.6	20.6*	16.79	14.85*	-12
Transportation and material moving.....	6.8	9.3*	16.28	14.62*	-10

¹ A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Hickory is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are also surveyed, but their data are not included in the national estimates. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year for a 3-year period. May 2013 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected in May 2013, November 2012, May 2012, November 2011, May 2011, and November 2010. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 75.3 percent based on establishments and 71.6 percent based on employment. The sample in the Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,696 establishments with a response rate of 91 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and 821 detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, employment and wage estimates for 94 minor groups and 458 broad occupations are available in the national data. OES data by state and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area are available from

www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm and www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm, respectively.

The May 2013 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm. **Area definitions**

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, N.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties. **Additional information**

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southeast. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/2013/may/methods_statement.pdf. Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request – Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2013

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production Occupations	29,630	3.1	\$14.85	\$30,890
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers.....	1,740	2.8	23.93	49,770
Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	100	6.1	14.01	29,140
Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers.....	150	0.7	13.65	28,380
Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters.....	90	1.0	14.13	29,380
Team Assemblers	4,180	3.7	12.51	26,010
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other	110	0.4	11.64	24,220
Bakers.....	240	1.3	9.87	20,530
Butchers and Meat Cutters	160	1.0	13.48	28,030
Food Batchmakers.....	(5)	(5)	9.53	19,810
Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	600	7.5	18.51	38,500
Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	470	2.3	13.00	27,040
Machinists.....	860	2.0	15.22	31,650
Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	230	1.7	15.40	32,030
Tool and Die Makers	110	1.3	21.04	43,760
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	400	1.1	14.66	30,480
Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	40	0.7	18.17	37,790
Heat Treating Equipment Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	70	3.1	13.60	28,280
Plating and Coating Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	50	1.2	13.49	28,050
Prepress Technicians and Workers	(5)	(5)	15.63	32,510
Printing Press Operators	280	1.6	16.11	33,500
Print Binding and Finishing Workers.....	110	1.9	14.77	30,730
Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers	300	1.4	9.70	20,180
Pressers, Textile, Garment, and Related Materials	120	2.1	10.07	20,950
Sewing Machine Operators	1,900	12.2	14.41	29,960
Tailors, Dressmakers, and Custom Sewers.....	(5)	(5)	8.81	18,330
Textile Bleaching and Dyeing Machine Operators and Tenders	520	41.5	12.61	26,230
Textile Cutting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	290	17.6	16.07	33,430
Textile Knitting and Weaving Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	670	27.7	12.96	26,960
Textile Winding, Twisting, and Drawing Out Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	290	10.2	12.22	25,410
Extruding and Forming Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Synthetic and Glass Fibers	230	11.0	13.94	29,000
Fabric and Apparel Patternmakers	250	38.3	19.29	40,130
Upholsterers	2,590	82.9	18.34	38,150
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters.....	340	3.8	14.86	30,900
Furniture Finishers.....	850	54.2	13.88	28,880
Model Makers, Wood.....	140	106.2	17.37	36,120
Patternmakers, Wood	80	88.8	17.75	36,920
Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood.....	470	10.3	13.50	28,080
Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing	1,120	15.5	12.79	26,590

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2013 - Continued

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators	140	1.2	16.04	33,360
Grinding and Polishing Workers, Hand.....	350	10.2	12.86	26,750
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	340	2.7	13.75	28,590
Cutters and Trimmers, Hand.....	580	38.9	15.52	32,280
Cutting and Slicing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	560	8.8	14.16	29,450
Extruding, Forming, Pressing, and Compacting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	100	1.3	16.10	33,500
Furnace, Kiln, Oven, Drier, and Kettle Operators and Tenders	50	2.4	17.06	35,480
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers.....	1,240	2.4	13.78	28,670
Dental Laboratory Technicians	40	1.0	17.77	36,970
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	700	1.7	13.04	27,120
Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	400	4.3	14.32	29,790
Painting, Coating, and Decorating Workers.....	(5)	(5)	16.55	34,430
Photographic Process Workers and Processing Machine Operators..	70	1.7	(5)	(5)
Adhesive Bonding Machine Operators and Tenders	230	11.7	12.52	26,040
Molders, Shapers, and Casters, Except Metal and Plastic.....	(5)	(5)	11.49	23,890
Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	200	2.0	16.48	34,280
Helpers-Production Workers.....	1,770	3.8	12.78	26,580
Production Workers, All Other	550	2.4	16.95	35,250

⁽¹⁾ For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_25860.htm.

⁽²⁾ Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

⁽³⁾ The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

⁽⁴⁾ Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

⁽⁵⁾ Estimate not released.